

The late David Purvis, long-time Farragut businessman and one of the founders of the Farragut Business Alliance, was key in bringing together developer Budd Cullom and the Biddle Farm property currently being considered for Farragut Town Center at Biddle Farms.

Cullom told the Town Board of Mayor and Aldermen during the Jan. 14 meeting, as they were considering three ordinances required to move the project forward (see separate story), about “being approached by the FBA, in late 2018-19, to ask us if we would be willing to meet with Town staff and look at the idea of the Biddle property, in trying to create a Town Center.

“Initially, we were hesitant,” Cullom continued. “But the more we looked at it, we thought, the location was superior, and I hated it, that the [old] Kroger had sat vacant for so long.”

While Cullom didn’t mention anyone by name during the meeting, in a follow-up email, he confirmed it was Purvis “alone who first approached me” about the project.

“But I have been thinking about the Biddle Farm for 30 years,” added Cullom, a 1982 Farragut High School graduate who has gone on to develop shopping centers and multi-family complexes throughout the south, including Northshore Town Center.

Farragut Mayor Ron Williams (also a member of FBA) in a separate interview said he was not surprised Purvis had reached out to Cullom.

“David was always a friend to Farragut,” Williams said of Purvis, who still served as FBA treasurer at the time of his death in December. “He was the driving force in trying to get something going on a Town Center, and was always trying to get someone interested in the Biddle property.”

Purvis already had a vested interest and familiarity with the Biddle land, as his business, Farragut Wine & Spirits (which he co-owned with his wife, Robin) was located in the “old Kroger” shopping center for a decade.

“David was always willing to join commercial developer Jim [Nixon, also an FBA board member and secretary] and travel to the [International Council of Shopping Centers] Conference in Las Vegas to use his contacts to recruit business to Farragut,” Williams added.

“David loved Farragut, and was an advocate for Farragut,” said Vice Mayor Louise Povlin, who also sits on the FBA board. “He did everything he could to bring businesses to the Town he loved.”

The FBA is a 501(c)(3) organization, established to support Town business, and its Board of Directors also includes Candace Viox (president, Water into Wine); Herc Ligdis, SouthEast Bank (Past President) Kevin Morrison, Turkey Creek Medical Center of Tennova Healthcare; Tony Cox, Republic Newspapers, Inc./Horne Radio, LLC Jeremy Kendrick, TDS Telecom; Darren Tallent, Hampton Inn Farragut; Michelle Austin, JC Penney; and David Smoak, Town of Farragut (non-voting, ex-officio).

Stephen F. Krempasky is its executive director.